REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-19, and 21-32 are pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 5-19, and 21-32 are all rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the combination of Kipust, U.S. Patent No. 6,002,427 and Gokcebay, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,552,777.

Rejections Under U.S.C. §103

In the most recent Office Action, the Examiner rejects the pending claims over a combination of the Kipust and Gokcebay, et al. references. However, the Examiner's arguments regarding the teaching in those references are technically incorrect and, in fact, the interpretations of the various claim elements are impossible to realize. The references fail to teach all of the claim elements. The Examiner recites to a single element in the prior art as being two completely different claimed elements, which is technically in error. Such interpretations would not be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art in the way in which the Examiner interprets the references.

More specifically, the present invention is directed to a lockout system for preventing a person from accessing electronic information through the interface device of a computer. It provides the lockout between the computer and its source/destination for the electronic information, which is the signal port in a wall or other position. Between a signal port and an interface device of a computer, a signal cable is

recited in Claim 1. Claim 1 also recites a locking device, which is in line with the signal cable. Again, the signal cable spans between a signal port, such as a telephone jack or other signal port, for example, in a wall, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 of the pending application and a computer. Electronic information passes back and forth between the computer and the signal port through the signal cable. The claimed locking device, which is in line in the signal cable, can selectively enable/disable the signal cable. A processor is coupled to the locking device for selectively actuating and de-actuating the locking device, and thereby disabling and enabling the signal cable, as recited in Claim 1. The Kipust reference does not provide any teaching whatsoever with respect to those claim elements.

Specifically, in the Office Action, the Examiner argues that the signal cable element of Claim 1 reads on the connector 117. The connector 117 spans between a proximity sensor 116 and a controller 118 of the PC 102. The Examiner argues that one end of the connector is then coupled to an interface of a device of a computer, which he indicates as the PC 102. Therefore, by the Examiner's own argument, that would mean that the other end of the connector, which is the proximity sensor 116, has to be the signal port. Therefore, the Examiner argues that the element 116 of Figure 1 in the Kipust reference is the signal port. However, in the next sentence in the Office Action, the Examiner argues that the claim element of the "locking device" reads on,

or is met by, sensor 116. Therefore, the Examiner is arguing that element 116 in Kipust is both the signal port, to which the signal cable connects, and also is the locking device, which is in line in the signal cable. This is physically impossibly, and simply technically wrong. A single element cannot be both of those elements of a signal port and a locking device, as both those elements are completely different elements.

Furthermore, the Examiner argues that the claimed signal cable, or connector 117, is coupled to computer 102, which includes the controller 118. The controller 118 may be software, or may be in the form of a card contained within the computer 102. However, the Examiner also argues that part of the computer 102 is also the claimed processor element that is coupled to the locking device. Specifically, he argues that element 118 is the claimed "processor" that is coupled to the locking device to actuate and de-acuate the locking device. That is, the same element 118, as part of the computer 102, is argued to be both at one end of the signal cable, and also is the processor that is coupled to the locking device that exists in line with the signal cable. Again, that is physically impossible. An element connected to one end of the signal cable (for example, PC 102 and controller 118) cannot be the same element that is also the processor that is coupled to an in line locking device to actuate and de-actuae the locking device. Furthermore, the

controller 118 (processor) does not control the proximity sensor 116 (locking device) in Kipust. Rather, it is the other way around.

These technical errors would be readily understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art, and the person of ordinary skill in the art would clearly find that the Kipust reference does not, in any way, teach the claimed invention of Claim 1. In fact, the purpose of the Kipust reference is merely to lock up a computer, when a person, or user, is away from the computer. The proximity sensor senses that no one is at the computer, and thus, arms a security system. There is no teaching whatsoever in Kipust with respect to simply leaving the computer in a normal running mode, but disarming its ability to access electronic information, as recited in Claim 1, which is a purpose of the invention.

In reality, there is no teaching whatsoever in Kipust regarding a locking device that sits in line with a signal cable that spans between a signal port and a computer. Furthermore, there is no teaching in Kipust of a processor that is coupled to the locking device for selectively actuating and de-actuating the locking device. The controller 118 of the computer does not control the proximity sensor 116, which the Examiner argues is the locking device. Rather, it controls the operation of the computer, not the proximity sensor. Therefore, the cited art of Kipust fails to teach various of the claim elements set forth in Claim 1.

The Gokcebay, et al. reference does not provide any of the teachings that are lacking in Kipust. In fact, the Gokcebay, et al.

reference is merely cited by the Examiner for teaching the use of a plug lock. Gokcebay, et al. teaches a mechanical/electronic lock and key, and thus, provides no teaching regarding the overall lockout system. Therefore, the Kipust/Gokcebay, et al. combination cannot render the claimed invention obvious under §103.

In fact, even the Gokcebay, et al. reference fails to teach the claimed plug lock. Because the claimed plug lock is indicated as being insertable with the signal cable proximate an end, and configured for maintaining the other end of the signal cable in operable connection with the interface device. The language cited by the Examiner in Column 3, Lines 6-10 of Gokcebay, et al. talks about nothing, except the internal structure of the lock cylinder. It does not, in any way, discuss or teach a plug lock that is insertable, with one end of the signal cable, and configured for maintaining the end of the signal cable in operable connection with an interface device to thus hinder bypass of the lockout system.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the combination of references including Kipust and Gokcebay, et al. because that combination does not teach anything even similar to the invention, and certainly does not teach all of the claim elements recited in Claim 1.

Dependent Claims 2-3 and 5-16 each depend from Claim 1, and include the limitations therein. Accordingly, those claims would be in an allowable form for the reasons discussed above. Furthermore, each of

those claims recites a unique combination of elements, which is not taught by the cited prior art.

Turning now to Claim 17, independent Claim 17 was rejected for the same reasons as Claim 1. Claim 17 recites the signal cable, locking device, and processor somewhat similar to those elements recited in Claim 1. Claim 17 does not recite the plug lock. For the reasons noted above, the combination of Kipust/Gokcebay, et al. does not, in any way, teach a person of ordinary skill in the art of a lockout system, such that the lockout system recited in Claim 17 would be obvious. In fact, as noted, the present invention would be far from obvious with respect to the cited references. Kipust is directed to an arming system that includes a proximity sensor to determine when a person is away from their computer. There is absolutely no teaching, or even a suggestion, with respect to disabling, or locking out, access to electronic information, as per the present invention.

Accordingly, Claim 17 is also not rendered obvious under §103 by the cited art.

Dependent Claims 19 and 21-32 each depend from Claim 17, and thus, would be allowable for the reason. Furthermore, each of those claims recites a unique combination of elements, which is not taught by the cited art.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that

effect is hereby requested. If it is found that the present Response does not place the application in a condition for allowance, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests that the examiner initiate a telephone interview to expedite prosecution of the application.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due in connection with this response. However, if any fees are necessary, the Commissioner may consider this to be a request for such and charge any necessary fees to deposit account 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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Document #429526